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101 nation, and used a separate language. In the
619 last century, the Spaniards, whom they had gone out to slaughter, surprized them by the way, and almost destroyed them all. A few who survived the massacre, with the widows and children of the slain, joined the neighbouring Abipones, and both nations, by inter-marriages, coalesced into one; the old language of the Yaaucanigas falling into disuse. The Abi-
619 ponian tribes pursue the same manner of life, and their customs and language, with the exception of a few words, are alike. Wondrous
[648] unanimity, and a constant alliance in arms, reigned amongst them as long as they had to deal with the Spaniards, against whom, as against a mutual foe, they bear an innate hatred, and whose servitude they resist with united strength. But though bound by the ties of consanguinity and friendship, impatient of the
[578] smallest injury, they eagerly seize on any occasion of war, and frequently weaken each other with mutual slaughter.

595 Like the other American savages, some of the
586 Abipones practise polygamy and divorce. Yet they are by no means numerous; the whole
161 nation consisting of no more than five thousand people. Intestine skirmishes, excursions against the enemy, the deadly contagion of the

h [i.e., the YAAUCANIGAS, a group of Abipon. – ANALYST]

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576 which they all rise up together at one moment.
623 Each then courteously takes leave of the master of the house in these words, *Lahikyegarik:* now I am going from you; to which he replies, *La micheroà:* now you are going from me. The plebeian Indians say *Lahik*, now I am going. When at the door of the house, that is, at the place where they go out, for they have no doors, they turn to the master, and say, *Tamtaña*, I shall see you again, an expression commonly made use of in our country. They would think it quite contrary to the laws of good-breeding, were they to meet any one, and not ask him where he was going: so that the word *Miekauè?* or *Miekauchitè?* where are you going? resounds in the streets.

586 595 The men think polygamy and divorce allowable, from the example of their ancestors, and of other American nations; but very few of the Abipones indulge in this liberty. Repudiation is much more common than a plurality of wives. But very many are content with one wife during the whole of their lives. They think it both wicked and disgraceful to have any illicit connection with other women; so that adultery is almost unheard-of amongst them. Both boys and girls display a native hilarity in their countenances, yet you never see them in company, or talking together.

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CHAPTER XIX.

OF THE MARRIAGE OF THE ABIPONES.

[171] 595 We know that a plurality of wives, or the repudiation of them, was familiar to the Hebrews and other nations, and that it is tolerated even now amongst the Mahometans and Chinese. The Greeks and Romans did not universally, nor at all times object to it. What wonder then that the custom of polygamy and divorce should be common to many savages of America, since it is upheld by the practice of the ancients? You should not however imagine that the whole nation of the Abipones follow after the steps of the other nations in that respect. The major [586] part are contented with one and the same wife, though I cannot deny that divorce is as frequent amongst them as the changing of the dress in Europe; yet I have known many who kept the same wife all their lives. But if any Abipon marries several women, he settles them in separate hordes, many leagues distant from one another, and visits first one, then the other, at intervals of a year. If he keeps many in the same house, which is very seldom the case, endless quarrels, blows, and battles, are sure to

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ensue, about the prerogative of governing the family, and the favour of their husband. *Ncjetenta*, as I said before, is a word appropriated to express a contest between two wives about their husband; any other sort of fight is called *Roć-lakitápegeta*.

Let us now speak of the reason that occasions divorce. It is very common amongst them to reject wives to whom they have formerly united themselves, at their own pleasure, and with impunity, so that divines have very properly doubted the reality of the marriage of savages, as it seems to want the perpetuity of the nuptial tie. If their wives displease them, it is sufficient; they are ordered to decamp. No farther cause or objection is sought for; the will of the husband, who dislikes his wife, stands in the place of reason. Should the husband cast his eyes upon any handsomer woman, the old wife must remove merely on this account, her fading form or advanced age being her only accusers, though she may be universally commended for conjugal fidelity, regularity of conduct, diligent obedience, and the children she has born. None of the men of most authority have either the right or the inclination to defend the divorced, or control the divorcer. But, appointing a drinking-party, wherein the memory of

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586 injuries is refreshed in the minds of the intoxicated guests, the relations fiercely avenge the dishonour done to the repudiated wife. Often, [587] too, women just cast off by one man are immediately married by another. I have observed [797] elsewhere that the younger women highly approve the law of Christ, and are anxious that themselves and their husbands should be baptized, because the perpetuity of their marriage is thereby secured, and their husbands prevented from changing or increasing the number (182) of their wives. This licence of divorce pro- [847] duces, as I have already related, bloody murders of children, and the incredible diminution of the whole nation.

582 You will find many things worthy of reprehension, but at the same time not a few deserving of praise, in the married state of the Abipones. I will inform you of those most worthy of mention. [795] Though the paternal indulgence of the Roman pontiffs makes the first and second degrees of relationship alone a bar to the marriage of the Indians, yet the Abipones, instructed by nature and the example of their ancestors, abhor the very thought of marrying any one related to them by the most distant tie of relationship. Long experience has convinced me, that the respect to consanguinity, by which they are deterred from marrying into their own families,